

Coins

There's a restructural lull in life at the Mint

By Roger Boye

WHEN UNITED STATES Mint director Mary Brooks resigned last month, she said President Carter should have the opportunity from the start to work with a director of his choice.

But it now appears that the President may not appoint a new director until after he reorganizes the federal bureaucracy, and that could take several months. The reason is that the U.S. Mint may be included in some of the reorganization.

For example, the Carter administration may restructure the mint's administration, with the top job going to a career civil service employee

rather than a loyal member of the President's party. Some observers even believe that the job duties of the treasurer of the U.S. and the U.S. Mint director might be combined.

At any rate, it already appears that the stature of the Bureau of the Mint has been diminished in the Carter administration. Head offices of the mint have been moved out of their present location in the Treasury Building and into a minor Washington office building.

The President also decided not to invite any coin collectors to serve on the 1977 U.S. Assay Commission, acting against the advice of Mrs. Brooks and others. Usually, about 25 collectors from around the country are asked to serve on

the commission each year for its one meeting in February.

In fact, the President may recommend to Congress that the commission be abolished. In the last several years, the commission's duties [to check the metal content of coins produced by the mint] have become entirely ceremonial.

Meanwhile, Frank H. MacDonald, longtime civil service employee of the mint, is acting director of the U.S. Mint. Mrs. Brooks, who was appointed director in 1969 by President Richard Nixon after a long career in Republican Party politics, is the widow of Republican U.S. Sen. C. Wayland Brooks of Illinois.